

8-1-2022

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Recommended Citation

Elislah, Neli and Irwansyah, Irwansyah (2022) "Audiobook Industry: Reading by Using Ear in the Digital Age," *Jurnal Komunikasi Indonesia*: Vol. 11: No. 2, Article 2.

DOI: 10.7454/jkmi.v11i2.1028

Available at: <https://scholarhub.ui.ac.id/jkmi/vol11/iss2/2>

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Audiobook Industry: Reading by Using Ear in the Digital Age

Neli Elislah¹, Irwansyah²

Abstrak/Abstract

As a medium for reading books through audio formats, digital audiobook are experiencing significant growth in popularity with a more diverse audience than ever before during the COVID-19 pandemic. Book publishers have begun to evolve to consider publishing books in audio format, in addition, the presence of audiobook on various alternative platforms based on streaming and subscription offers convenience to read a book. This study aims to survey the development of audiobook in the current digital era, especially in Indonesia with the presence of streaming and subscription media platforms. Furthermore, by reassessing the concept of reading books in the digital era to understand reading an audiobook through hearing. By using the literature review method, this research has seen a change in the conception of reading books which was previously only associated with reading writing through the eyes, because the presence of digital audiobook allows readers to carry out reading activities with high mobility by only through the eyes or the sense of hearing. Simplicity through listening activities brings audiobook into popular media that is present in various learning activities in Indonesia and also brings new experiences in enjoying literature through sound that offers readers to read books by listening. Reading is an important part of learning, with every day audiobook are increasing literacy through new reading media. Flexibility for readers aside from making audiobook a product of written books by offering readers the option to choose a format that supports their literacy and literary experience. This research provides findings for the audio industry, which is currently popular as well as an alternative in the reading industry, especially in Indonesia in today's digital era.

Sebagai media membaca buku melalui format audio, audiobook digital mengalami pertumbuhan popularitas yang signifikan dengan pendengar yang lebih beragam dari sebelumnya selama pandemi COVID-19. Penerbit buku sudah mulai berevolusi untuk mempertimbangkan mempublikasi buku dengan format audio, selain itu hadirnya audiobook di berbagai platform alternatif berbasis streaming dan langganan menawarkan kemudahan untuk membaca sebuah buku. Penelitian ini bertujuan untuk meninjau perkembangan audiobook di era digital saat ini khususnya di Indonesia dengan hadirnya platform media streaming dan langganan. Selanjutnya, dengan menilai kembali konsep membaca buku di era digital untuk memahami membaca sebuah audiobook melalui pendengaran. Dengan menggunakan metode literature review penelitian ini melihat adanya perubahan mengenai konsepsi membaca buku yang sebelumnya hanya dikaitkan dengan membaca tulisan melalui mata, karena hadirnya audiobook digital memungkinkan pembaca untuk melakukan aktifitas membaca dengan mobilitas tinggi dengan hanya melalui mata atau indra pendengaran. Kesederhanaan melalui aktifitas mendengarkan membawa audiobook menjadi media populer yang hadir diberbagai aktifitas pembelajaran di Indonesia dan juga menghadirkan pengalaman baru dalam menikmati sastra, melalui suara yang direkam menawarkan pembaca untuk membaca buku dengan mendengarkan. Membaca merupakan bagian penting dari pembelajaran, dengan hadirnya audiobook telah akan meningkatkan literasi melalui media membaca baru. Fleksibilitas bagi pembaca tidak lagi membuat audiobook menjadi sebuah produk sampingan dari buku tulisan dengan menawarkan pilihan bagi pembaca untuk memilih format yang mendukung pengalaman literasi dan sastra mereka. Penelitian ini memberikan temuan bagi industri audio yang sedang populer sekaligus alternatif dalam industri membaca khususnya di Indonesia di era digital saat ini.

Kata Kunci/Keywords

Audiobook, industri audio, membaca melalui mendengarkan, industri membaca, disabilitas, membaca di era digital.

Audiobook, audio industry, reading by listening, reading industry, disabilities, reading in the digital age.

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Introduction

Audiobooks have begun to attract more listeners in the last decade with their ease of access and various uses. Audiobooks, podcasts, and other forms of online audio-based entertainment have experienced significant growth in popularity with a diverse audience during the COVID-19 pandemic, supported by highly innovative smartphone technology (Edison Research, 2021). Through smartphones, digital audiobooks can be listened to at any time and downloaded in

minutes anywhere with the help of the internet. Apart from being used in classroom and learning activities (Fadhli, 2021; Rahman & Hajar, 2020; Rusmanayanti, 2021), audiobooks allow listeners to be freer as a hands-free activity and have recently been used for fun and relaxation (Zable Fisher, 2021), such as as an alternative to reading literary works through audiobooks (Mamat et al., 2021). The practice of digital audiobooks with the mobility offered allows reading activities to be carried out in a new way compared to before, regarding the mobility of time and place to read (Tattersall Wallin & Nolin, 2020).

The publishing industry has previously adapted to major technological advances, with the shift from physical compact discs (CDs) to digital downloads, the audiobook market is now booming on digital platforms. Responding to the needs of commuters, educators, and consumers for reduced screen time, audio publishers are capitalizing on the COVID-19 push for the virtual world by marketing and reaching their listeners online (Snelling, 2021). In Indonesia alone, the pandemic has made book sales switch to digital. Digital book sales have increased rapidly with the development of formats in digital books (Prague, 2020). This allows digital audiobooks to continue to grow in popularity significantly as smartphone technology advances. The presence of audiobooks or electronic book formats that are listened to had existed long before e-books were available. Historically, audiobooks have been described as a by-product of printed books and a service for readers who have difficulty reading printed books - dyslexia, visual impairment, etc. (Have & Pedersen, 2021).

The development and popularity of audiobooks have grown in line with technological developments. Since the 1860s, Thomas Edison had a vision of literature being democratized through devices for storytelling in every home. Edison started recording stories onto the phonograph, but printed books were much easier and cheaper to make than audiobooks recorded on the phonograph. Practical limitations cut down on Edison's ambitions, but the idea persists (Rubery, 2008). The earliest experiments took place in the US, but Britain made a breakthrough when Captain Ian Fraser, wounded in the First World War and blind, had the idea to record a book, he was assigned to lead a team at the Royal National Institute of the Blind (RNIB) developing the technology. Recording a book (Best, 2020). After unsuccessful attempts to create a book-reading machine, the RNIB set up its recording studio in 1934 to press volume to disc discs (RNIB, n.d.). The first distributor for recording books, Books on Tape Inc, was founded by Duval Hecht in 1975; then in the 1990s, new technology facilitated various digital formats, including MP3 downloads (Rubery, 2011).

Along with the emergence of digital media, audiobooks have become the main media, no lon-

ger a by-product. If the sales of printed books are high, printed books will be recorded and turned into audiobooks. The audiobook market is high, and today many audiobooks are published simultaneously with printed books and e-books, thus creating flexibility of choice from the moment the reading is published (Have & Pedersen, 2021). Nowadays, audiobooks are not only used by some people who have a limited reading of books, and digital audiobooks attract a wider audience. Streaming and subscription services, such as Audible and Spotify, have made audiobooks available to a wide commercial audience (Best et al., 2020). The trend of listening to audiobooks and other audio media in Indonesia is still increasing based on the Hootsuite report, at least every Indonesian spends more than 3 hours in one day listening to audio content online, which has increased compared to the previous year (Kemp, 2022). Based on digital reports in the data portal, the percentage of internet usage of users aged 16 to 64 years who listen to audio content via the internet every week, audiobooks still occupy number 4, namely 11.2% after listening to music audio content streaming 47.5%, listening to podcasts 35.6%, and listening to online radio 14.6% (Kemp, 2022).

Reading was always associated with activities where people used their eyes to decode written texts. Nowadays, reading can use various human senses. With the advent of various digital devices and the growing popularity of audiobooks, it has become clear that the notion of reading and what books mean needs to be revisited (Tattersall Wallin, 2021). The practice of listening according to ancient traditions is undergoing substantial changes, the birth of audiobooks started from the ancient tradition of listening to fairy tales dating back a century to the point of the introduction of digital audiobooks that offer access to a large catalog of audiobooks for streaming or downloading via mobile applications (Rubery, 2008). This activity is becoming more familiar with providing multiple digital platforms with instant access to audiobooks offered through various subscription services. These new opportunities for reading could lead to fundamental changes in reading practice (Tattersall Wallin, 2021). Reading should not be reduced to visual decoding of writing but can be auditive decoding of audiobooks that offer different forms of literary experience (Have & Pedersen, 2021).

The development of audiobooks offers the possibility of revisiting how we understand reading and the possibility of reassessment to enable the activity of listening to a book or reading by ear. When considering the different reading activities, it becomes clear how they engage the separate human senses. The sense of hearing plays a vital role in reading audiobooks, while the eye and the sense of sight play an equally important role in the traditional reading of printed books

or any text on screen or paper (Have & Pedersen, 2021; Tattersall Wallin, 2021). In addition, fingers and the sense of touch are essential for the reading of braille by some blind people (Bonk et al., 2021; Morgan, 2003). From the presentation of the problems above, this study wants to re-survey the current development of audiobooks and then reassess the concept of reading to understand reading through other senses, namely hearing. So the research question posed is: How does the development of audiobooks in the digital era produce new reading formats to change the way of reading in the digital era?

Literature Review

Audio Industry

The audio industry has grown rapidly since the invention of the microphone in 1875 and players in this industry always try to think and act out of the box in innovating and developing their technology (Kelley, 2019). The development of the audio industry cannot be separated from the application of audio technology, where the arrangement, operation, and maintenance of audio equipment are carried out. These developments also affect how humans produce and consume music and audio products from the studio and beyond (Yuwono et al., 2020). The audio itself is a term used to describe sound or noise in the range that can be heard by the human ear (Computer Hope, 2021). Audio comes from or is related to acoustic, mechanical, or electrical frequencies that correspond to sound waves that are usually heard, which have a frequency of around 20 to 20,000 Hertz (Yuwono et al., 2020). Data released by Trinity Audio states that audio is the complete media format that can trigger a memory, trust, and connection for humans who hear it. The liking and effectiveness of audio formats for listeners even outperform video on demand, TV, and social media (Jaworski, 2021). Audio is a popular medium that can reach listeners because it offers personalization, convenience, and meaningful content.

The concept of audio is also related to how it is reproduced, such as sound transmission and recording. In its development, audio technology is related to audio sound, including audio signals, frequencies, semantic audio, stereophonic sound, electronic audio, audio equipment, and digital audio (Yuwono et al., 2020). Meanwhile, even though it sounds almost the same, the sound differs from the audio. The main difference between the two is in the form of energy. Sound is a longitudinal mechanical energy wave that propagates through a medium that causes pressure variations in the medium. Meanwhile, audio is made of electrical energy (analog or digital signal), representing sound electrically (Sound Sight, 2022). Suppose the audio is at a frequency that humans can hear (20-20,000 Hertz, then the sound wave can be less or more than that frequency. Sound is divided into three characters, namely audible

sound (20 Hz - 20,000 Hz), infrasound (below 20 Hz), and ultrasound (above 20,000 Hz).

Voice

Sound is a sound that humans produce, it can be a sound that humans make when crying, laughing, or even muttering, besides that, a voice can also be unique, like a fingerprint for someone, because everyone has a different voice (Hasa, 2021). Sound is one of the subsystems that exist in the brain in building a function that moves like a 'mini theater' in an individual's head, along with other aspects such as sight and smell or smell (Given, 2003). Voices represent the clearest difference between printed books and audiobooks; therefore, it is important to include the role of voice when analyzing audiobooks (Have & Pedersen, 2021). Through the audiobook sound the text can be interpreted, thus creating a new medium for reading through the ears, namely the audiobook.

Audio-based mediums have limitations in describing a situation to listeners, so audio mediums such as audiobooks must rely on verbal explanations and sound effects to build the expected situation; this is where the role of a theater of mind is to make it less boring and more 'life.' This is also in line with what Chion (2019) said, that creating and deconstructing feelings for the location and physical and psychological of an atmosphere are important aspects of sound techno drama (Chion, 2019). The audio industry has its place for the audience by offering a completely different experience through hearing. Audio does not have direct access, and the quality of this sound media is labeled blind, leading us to a creative process (Killmeier, 2013). Audio is a popular medium that can reach listeners because it offers personalization, convenience, and meaningful content. The lack of visual stimulation in audio media can revive the "theater of Mind" metaphor which engages the listener to be interested in the atmosphere created by the narrative audiobook and encourages reflection and internal dialogue.

Audiobook

Audiobooks are becoming increasingly popular in the digital age: streaming and subscription services, such as Audible and Spotify, have made audio stories available to a wide commercial audience, while applications such as Libby and BorrowBox facilitate the 'borrowing' of audiobooks from library services (Best et al., 2020). Audiobook itself is a Electronic book format which listened to instead of being read in the traditional sense, Technologically and materially, audiobooks have nothing in common with printed books; instead, it shares their technology and format with music (Have & Pedersen, 2021). Audiobooks have been available in libraries of various countries for a long time, starting with the idea of providing inclusive services for people with visual disabilities, from recordings, audio cassettes, and CDs to downloadable and stream-

ing audio found in libraries in various countries as well as in Indonesia (Bonk et al., 2021; Dali & Brochu, 2020). In general, audiobooks are not a new invention, more than a century, books have been recorded with various technologies aimed at various reading needs.

Audiobooks cannot be solely defined as recorded texts that are read and recorded oral stories without written sources, nor are audiobooks, aesthetics and use based on printed books needed, so the definition of audiobooks should not be separated from printed or contemporary books and institutionalize literary contexts in the form of authors, publishers, bookstores, libraries, etc. (Have & Pedersen, 2021). The following definition also distinguishes audiobooks from other audio-based media such as podcasts and talk radio, even though they consist more or less of text that is read aloud. Improvements to subscription-based digital audiobooks bring more changes and possibilities than previous technologies because it makes it possible to store one audiobook in one digital file (Tattersall Wallin & Nolin, 2020). A wave of audiobook popularity has occurred in the last three years. A Deloitte report says global sales of audiobooks have grown 25-30% annually for the past three years and will reach 3.5 billion US dollars by 2020, driven by the US and China, which are each control about a third of the market (by comparison, global print book sales are a whopping 145 Billion US Dollars per year), while the UK is fourth, accounting for only 2% of the global market (Preston, 2020). Apart from being a part of literary ecology, audiobooks are also part of the culture around mobile sound media. Audiobooks are changing with digitalization like other communication media, such as films and music, which are currently communicated easily through the help of the internet.

The misconception is that printed books are superior, and audiobooks can deceive printed books, some people feel they do not retain as much information when they listen as when they read; others find listening more enjoyable, especially if it is a common practice (Hutton, 2005). In addition, people are generally hesitant to change their reading habits from previously printed books to audio-based ones (Snelling, 2021). However, the StatShot report for 2020 from the Association of American Publishers (AAP) shows that sales of audiobook formats have seen a 16.5 percent increase in downloads and account for 8.3% of the total book industry trade revenue (Anderson, 2021). The increasing popularity of digital audiobooks has been accompanied by the simultaneous growth of other digital book formats, such as e-books, which raises the question of whether audiobooks are an alternative to reading books.

Reading by listening

Audiobooks are old media that are renewed

through digitization due to the presence of new media and presenting remediation of printed book media representations in audiobook media, remediation itself is a concept that has become agenda-setting in conceptualizing the use of existing media in the digital arrangement process (Bolter & Grusin, 2000). Remediation of printed books into audiobooks, and book content, can remain the same. At the same time, the difference lies in audio-based media, so more people are involved in reading by listening, remediation from printed books to audio is merely a format change (Hampson Lundh & Smith, 2016). Discussing audiobooks in remediation from printed books tends to limit reasoning about audiobooks. In contrast, understanding audiobooks with a deep reading conception as a contemplative experience will raise the question, is true with audiobooks that we read by ear (Pedersen & Have, 2012). Reading by ear or listening is a valuable concept to describe reading done by the other senses of humans, namely hearing.

Listening to audiobooks can build a personal mental space and daily rituals, just like media (books, radio, television) other everyday, still, in line with new digital mobile media, digital audiobooks provide a new type of ritual practice (Pedersen & Have, 2012). When a person hears the sound of an audiobook, it is not enough just to hear it to read it, it is needs to be actively create meaning from the text, thus being able to read the audiobook (Tattersall Wallin, 2021). The mobility offered by audiobooks breaks through other digital book formats, namely e-books, suppose e-books make it easy for readers to read mobility by simply downloading them on their smartphones, audio voice allows readers to listen to audiobooks by doing other activities such as walking without using their hands and eyes (Tattersall Wallin & Nolin, 2020). Audiobooks presence and popularity are not only seen from the presence of a new reading medium reading but also to create a new way of reading by ear.

Research Methodology

The method used in this research is Literature Review. The general term for Literature review is published material that examines the most recent or current literature and covers various subject levels with completeness and comprehensively (Grant & Booth, 2009). This research examines the latest and most recent literature on the audio industry in the form of audiobooks involving several concepts such as remediation, deep-reading, and reading by listening by providing an appropriate description. This research seeks to identify what has been achieved by previous research regarding the development of audiobooks that have experienced popularity and the conception of reading and listening to audiobooks. The keywords used in the search are audiobook, listening audiobook, reading audiobook, digital audiobook, and audiobook during the lockdown.

There are several goals that literature reviewers want to achieve, namely theory development, theory construction or evaluation, surveying the state of knowledge on a particular topic, uncovering problems, weaknesses, contradictions, or controversies in a particular field of inquiry, and providing historical records of the development of theory and research on the certain topic (Baumeister & Leary, 1997). This research aims to survey the state of knowledge on a particular topic by providing an overview and helpful integration in research areas regarding the audio industry in specific audiobooks. This study collects data by reading, sorting, and analyzing journal articles, previous research reports, and a series of reports on audiobooks and the concept of reading in the digital era. After obtaining the data, the researcher conducted a data analysis by classifying each finding into 4 (four) categories of conclusions for the disability group reading audiobooks, digital audiobook trends: streaming and subscriptions, reading and listening to audiobooks, and reading digital audiobooks in Indonesia.

Research result

Group with Disabilities Reading Audiobooks

Audiobooks have taken a variety of formats throughout their evolution from wax cylinders to vinyl records, then to cassette tapes to compact discs to digital files that can be accessed via the internet, indicating that audiobooks not only act as a substitute for their print counterparts but also expand their market to new listeners. Today's audiobooks will reach beyond the past, which only refers to complement the need for people with visual impairments to read, now available to anyone who prefers listening to reading. When talking about audiobooks, of course, it cannot be separated from the brilliant idea of Thomas Edison in the 1870s, who started to record a story into a phonograph, Edison's vision was to bring literature to be heard through sound in every home (Rubery, 2008). This idea continues to be realized through recorded books as the potential to help people with visual impairments. While Edison's enthusiasm for 'phonographic books' may have fallen on his conception of assistive devices for the visually impaired, the recorded literature for the gramophone was tested in the early 1920s by the Royal National Institute for the Blind (RNIB) for the benefit of soldiers injured during the First World. In 1935, the RNIB Speech Book Service delivered its first audiobooks (Agatha Christie's *The Murder of Roger Ackroyd* and Joseph Conrad's *Typhoon*) to the blind and partially blind (Rubery, 2008).

In 2002, services that had begun recording on 12-inch discs made of shellac and, later, on cassettes had switched to the digital recording through the use of special long-playable compact discs. Since the 1980s, digital CDs have begun to take over the audiobook market. Although currently, audiobooks are not widely circulated in

the form of CDs or cassettes, the development of storage media for audiobooks are cannot be separated from the history of Tolstoy's *War and Peace* in full editions has gone from demanding 119 LPs, 45 cassettes or 50 CDs, until now, with MP3 (Rubery, 2011). Audio technology is considered to make it easier for readers, a relatively short 157-page novel can be shortened again with an audiobook format with a duration of 3 hours 39 minutes, which is wrong one of the advantages of audiobooks. People are begin to switching to digital audiobooks that provide streaming and subscription services via the internet. This is one of the advantages of audiobooks that many publishers consider this potential convenience. Publishers in Indonesia have evolved from print to other books, namely audiobooks, thus enabling their readers to enjoy content through sound (Suhendra et al., 2020). Audiobook mobility allowed readers to do other activities, and audiobooks are often listened to through headphones, allowing other audio signals from the phone to enter the reading. This way, the story stops or disappears when someone calls or texts for a while. Also, audiobooks are usually not recorded in stereo, so the same signal comes from both sides of the headphones. It's clear that small earbuds allow more ambient sound than large headphones and may therefore be better suited for situations where, for example, you want to fit in traffic while listening to an audiobook.

Digital audiobook trends: streaming and subscriptions

Audiobooks are one of the few reading practices that have improved general literacy. Audiobooks for learning English are the most widely used in Indonesia (Rahman & Hajar, 2020; Rusmanayanti, 2021). Audiobooks are useful tools to help students improve their fluency, fluency, and expressive reading skills, and listening to audiobooks improves pronunciation skills in English. Audiobooks are an easy medium to help language learners with language learning problems. Second language. Audiobooks allow them to engage with the content of the text more deeply and Because comprehension is one of the important phases in understanding the text, audiobooks help improve students' reading comprehension (Tsany, 2021). The audiobook format is also used by several other general subjects (Warsihna et al., 2021) to subjects that require high logic, namely mathematics (Zein et al., 2019). Children and adolescents choose audiobooks as an alternative to overcome reading difficulties or do not have access to physical books, so that pleasure and learning can be obtained from listening to books. Best et al. (2020) reports that since the UK went into lockdown during the COVID-19 pandemic, there has been a change in the literacy practices of children and adolescents, one of which is wider engagement with audiobooks, in early 2020, by 16.3% of children And teenager age 9-18 year

said they listened to audiobooks. The reason for their involvement with audiobooks is because by reading through audiobooks, they have more time, besides that easy access to audiobooks compared to other book formats allows them to access a wider range of content.

Since the emergence of streaming and subscription services such as Audible and Spotify that provide audiobook content, making audio stories widely and commercially enjoyable, several audiobook library services have also been present and widely used in Indonesia for learning. Storynory is a platform that provides books in audio format. Since November 2005, the story has provided free audio stories; until now, it has developed into an audiobook archive for children (Storynory, n.d.). Storynory is one of the platforms widely used in learning English in Indonesia. By offering free audio streaming, Storynory aims to show imagination, good writing, and good narration. Tsany (2021) said the Storynory audiobook can be downloaded for free and can easily operate Storynory in the classroom without internet access, and promising results from students and teachers are obtained, they enjoy the audiobook while understanding the text easily and help students learn English word pronunciation. Extensive reading activities can also be done using audiobooks, and teachers use graded readers of the material provided by Xreading online, Xreading is a platform that provides online libraries as well as provides audiobook readers. Savitri & Munir (2022) recently prefer to read online using mobile technology. Xreading is a platform that provides a variety of books through the Xreading subscription platform, teachers and students use Xreading to improve their reading and grammar skills through audiobooks (Savitri & Munir, 2022). Through distribution on streaming platforms and subscriptions, digital audiobooks are no longer present as complementary media for the need to read a book but have emerged as the main media as an alternative for readers who want to read books through listening.

Discussion and Discussion

Reading and Listening to Audiobooks

The vast digital audiobook market, with the presence of streaming platforms and subscriptions via the internet, enables audiobooks to reach a much wider group of consumers than audiobooks that were previously only intended for groups with reading limitations. The boom in the commercialization of audiobooks has made audiobooks not only a by-product of the original medium, namely printed books, and have been recognized as a separate medium. In other words, an audiobook is not just a sound recording of a literary or academic book that is read, usually by a professional reader or the author himself. This is called remediation of a printed book. In line with Have & Pedersen (2020), who reveal that audiobooks are not just a remediation of printed

books but more deeply referring to oral traditions or reading a novel, people who read aloud have indirectly read books to other people who listen to them, this is what is called a different literary experience than reading it directly. Reading books through audiobooks is not just a trend, the popularity of audiobooks brings back the statement, that when life becomes more complex, like what is happening in today's digital era, people will tend to read less and spend more time listening.

Reading solely is a concept that can be understood from various points of view. Reading can be defined as the process of making meaning from a text. Reading can also be defined as interpreting and understanding the meaning of various contexts through the media of film, music, etc. To focus more on understanding reading audiobooks, it is better to narrow reading by reading books or in writing that is read or writings that are listened to through audiobooks. Reading audiobooks is the concept of reading using the sense of hearing, an alternative to reading compared to reading a text directly. Likewise, listening can be understood from various points of view, and listening can be interpreted as an activity such as paying attention or eavesdropping. However, as explained earlier, reading audiobooks is not just hearing a recorded sound, Reading audiobooks requires active brain activity, which requires readers to focus on listening, not just listening. Pedersen & Have (2012) try to conceptualize audiobooks with the concept of modality, Modality studies investigate, using various practices, how meaning arises, is distributed, and interpreted through many different communicative modes. The modalities of audiobooks and printed books are present as different media experiences, Through printed books, writing is felt sensorily through sight and partly by the sense of touch, while through audiobooks, writing is mainly perceived through hearing. Printed books require certain reading skills usually taught in schools, namely punctuation marks, which are very different from the skills used to understand spoken language taught from birth and automatically embedded in the brain. Meanwhile, listening to digital audiobooks involves sound waves of technologically mediated speech. Sensory modalities involve hearing and possible tactile experience from earphones and interfaces, less involving body and vision that may move which act independently of the reading situation.

As a media in audio format, audiobooks have their place for readers by offering a completely different experience through hearing, audio does not have direct access, the quality of this media sound is labeled blind, which leads us to an imaginative process. Audiobooks have had the opportunity to create a 'Theater of Mind' in which the viewer engages mentally in an alternative audio narrative. Audio is a popular medium that can reach listeners because it offers personalization,

convenience, and meaningful content. Data released by Trinity Audio states that audio is the most complete media format that can trigger a memory, trust, and connection for humans who hear it. The liking and effectiveness of audio formats for listeners even outperform video on demand, TV, and social media (Jaworski, 2021). The lack of visual stimulation in the audiobook can revive the “theater of Mind” metaphor which engages the listener to be interested in the atmosphere created by the audiobook and encourages reflection and internal dialogue. While reading an audiobook is not enough just to listen, it is necessary to actively create meaning from the text by producing a theater of mind.

The concept of reading and listening places emphasis on the user involving the taste and workings of the brain rather than book material and fixed senses to read it. The hearing sense plays a vital role in reading audiobooks, while the eyes and the sense of sight play an equally important role in the traditionally reading of printed books or any text on paper or screen. In addition, fingers and the sense of touch are very important for the braille reading performed by some blind people. Tattersall Wallin (2020) develops the concept of reading by listening when talking about separate forms of reading activity that involve the human senses other than the eye, he suggests reading is understood as a form of meaning-making activity that involving separate senses, and that individuals can make choices depending on what is most appropriate in different material situations, what is available to them, and their preferences and choices. A person may read by listening and read by looking at the same time, maybe listening to an audiobook recording while at the same time following the text with their eyes. It shows how reading can be done through engagement with various formats, tools, and senses.

Reading Digital Audiobooks in Indonesia

Initially, the presence of audiobooks in Indonesia was intended as a reading service for readers who have limited reading of written books, namely the blind. This is stated in the Law on Persons with Disabilities, Law Number 8 of 2016, which elaborates the rights of disabled groups that the state must fulfill. One of them is in Article 5 which regulates the rights of persons with disabilities to obtain Education and Information. The presence of audiobooks is needed as a means of supporting people with visual impairments to be able to access knowledge from books and various other information. As the 4th largest country in the world, Indonesia’s population continues to increase yearly. This means that the number of people with disabilities also increases every year. According to data from the Central Bureau of Statistics (BPS), it shows total population aged 10 years and over in the amount of 8.56% have functional difficulties, The 2015 Inter-Census Population Survey (SUPAS) also shows that the

largest presentation of disability is visual impairment in the amount of 6.36% (Ismandari, 2019). To fulfill the rights of persons with disabilities, the government provides various services for persons with disabilities. For example, when using public libraries, facilities have been provided several public libraries with disability-friendly facilities. Bonk et al. (2021) have proven that the National Library of the Republic of Indonesia has provided facilities to support visitors with visual impairments that have met the International Federation of Associations standards. This commitment is manifested in that, apart from providing a braille collection, the National Library of Indonesia has provided 700 to 800 audiobooks that can be found and can be borrowed along with the audio player provided by the library.

Reading is an important part of academic learning besides other learning activities; traditionally, new information from a book can be obtained, as well as reading an audiobook. So it is reasonable thing that audiobooks have become a medium of learning by teachers in Indonesia because in this digital era, audio media are cheap teaching materials and can be accessed by all people, this function can be an independent learning medium (Warsihna et al., 2021). The existence of audiobooks can also provide a new nuance in increasing students’ creativity and productivity for the material they are learning. Easy to use anywhere and can be listened to anytime, even in situations that require multi-tasking. However, reading audiobooks also requires active brain activity by creating meaning from the text heard through the audiobook, just as happens when reading a printed book or e-book. Tattersall Wallin (2020) mentions audiobook readers may be able to perform other activities that depend on the eyes, arms, or even the whole body but these activities should leave the mind blank and focus on brain activity in listening to books. Through audiobooks, the reader will eliminate the activity of the active sense of sight and activate the sense of hearing to read but still use active brain activity.

An audiobook is a text recorded from a printed book or a book written orally in audio form that the same readers can hear as when they read a printed book. Indeed, when viewed from the technological format, audiobooks have nothing in common with printed books because they do not use written media to be read on a paper or screen. Audiobooks share their technological format with other audio industries, such as music, radio, and podcasts. Have & Padersen (2021) define that not all recorded texts that are read are audiobooks, talk radio, and podcasts, although they more or less consist of texts that are read out, are not audiobooks because they arise from media institutions and blogging crocodiles on demand. Audiobooks are part of the literary ecology that has developed due to digitization, so audiobooks must be like the previous format, involving authors, publishers, bookstores, libraries, and so on.

Audiobooks have become a new literary medium in Indonesia, there have been many literary works that have start to use audio as a medium by recording sound readings to attract readers' interest. Balai Pustaka at the age of 100 years, in 2017 to be exact, chose a path to transform and convert book content that was previously only in print format into audiobooks (Syahrul, 2019). Apart from being one of the publishers' commitments to preserve classical literature so that it can still be enjoyed in the digital era, the potential of digital audiobooks that help readers with mobility that allows readers to do other activities along with reading is also the potential seen by publishers. Publishers have also evolved to develop a book reading industry due to innovations in book formats such as e-books and audiobooks. An electronic book or e-book may only be able to offer mobility making it easier for readers to hold thousands of books on their smartphones, however readers still need full concentration involving the senses of sight through their eyes and hands to scroll their smartphone screens. The popularity of audiobooks is taking part in the reading and listening industry, from the digital publishing side of a book and today's digital audio listening platform.

One of the reading platforms in Indonesia that provides an audiobook platform is Innoval. In addition to providing books in text form, Innoval also offers various book formats such as audiobooks to comics. Julies' novel entitled *CEO Gondrong Itu, My Husband* includes a textbook that is also available in audiobook form, read by Rina Puspita with the pen name *Mis Dawet*, the audiobook reading is done directly with the reader's voice without any additional audio background (Mujiningsih et al., 2022). The presence of two different formats in the same book, offering the option for readers to choose what format of the book they will read, the presence of a subscription and streaming platform like this that brings audiobooks no longer a by-product of a printed book, where a printed book

will only record if it makes a lot of profit, and after some time the printed book is published. Have & Pedersen (2021) point out that the high market of audiobook is resulting in many audiobooks being published alongside print and e-books, creating flexibility of choice for readers from the moment the reading is published. Suppose audiobooks are understood not only as an updated literary format, from print to audio, of course. In that case, it will be a question of what literature is, and digital audiobooks lead to a new understanding of literary experience through new technology mediality, grammar to the idea of written literature.

Conclusion

The presence of digital audiobooks today is not only intended as a reading service for readers with the limited capability to read books with writing, such as disability blind people or people with dyslexia. Reading books is no longer always linked with activities that require using the sense of sight. Audiobooks are an alternative for readers to read books which are mostly done through the sense of hearing. Reading, an important part of learning, makes institutions, teachers and students start using the book format through audiobooks which presents a new way of reading through listening to a book that makes it easier for students to understand the contents of a book. In addition, the presence of a streaming platform and subscription to an audiobook has allowed readers to enjoy different literary activities through recorded sounds and can be listened to at any time, resulting in space and time mobility for readers. The simplicity of audiobooks has emerged as part of an evolving literary ecology due to digitization. Publishers have evolved to new reading formats by ear. The presence of various formats of a book offers readers a choice for what kind of book format to read. Flexibility for readers to produce audiobooks is no longer a by-product of a printed book.

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